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UFL NEWS

A Newsletter of the University Federation of Librarians, Berkeley Campus, AFT Local 1795
Representing librarians at the University of California, Berkeley

November 1988 | Editor: Lillian Castillo-Speed | Volume 2 No. 3

REOPENERS DRAG ON

The contract reopeners which began in May 1988 will continue into the seventh month when our UFL team meets once again with the University on November 15. The Layoff Article (VII), as expected, has been the main source of disagreement.

The University reopened this article in the wake of a layoff grievance case at UCLA which the University lost. It is clear from the negotiation discussions that the University wants to have complete power over layoff decisions. Career status rights are secondary to the University. Any kind of employee rights, in fact, are secondary to the University's insistence on the power to lay off whomever whenever it wants to.

The Union has bargained in good faith in an attempt to hold on to some kind of assurance that the University will not arbitrarily lay off librarians for disciplinary reasons or for programmatic reasons. And yet the University continues in its attempts to make our contract in this article as one-sided as possible. That is why the reopeners continue. And that is why the Union needs your support at this critical time.

A stronger Union gives us more power at the bargaining table. Join the Union. Sign up a colleague. Give us your ideas and comments on the bargaining process. We represent YOU at the table. Let us know what your concerns are.

--L. Castillo-Speed, UFL Bargaining Team Member

WE SURVIVED WHEELER HALL

Three libraries were very adversely affected by the discovery of asbestos in Wheeler Hall this summer. The Asian American Studies Library, the Native American Studies Library, and the Chicano Studies Library were all shut down on August 24, 1988. In late September the Asian American Studies library moved to 133 Doe. On October 26 the other two libraries relocated to the 3rd floor of the Berkeley Tower Building at the corner of University Ave. and Shattuck. Although the Wheeler Hall rooms previously occupied by the libraries have been declared asbestos free by a certified industrial hygienist, seismic work continues. The libraries expect to return to their permanent locations during the summer of 1989.

Although the librarians were separated from their collections there was no shortage of work! Meetings, phone calls, memos and walking back and forth from temporary offices off campus (Banway Building), to Wheeler, Dwinelle and Doe kept us busier than ever. The personal stress was tremendous. The long-term effects on services, collections, project deadlines and professional development are yet to be fully assessed, but we know they will be considerable.

We worried about the health and safety of ourselves, our employees and our patrons, this compounded by lack of information, mistakes and mix-ups in the initial days. For example, the memo circulated to Wheeler Hall employees telling them to vacate on August 24 was not signed and had no letterhead. At one point we were told that one of the library rooms in Wheeler would have to be sealed off indefinitely because the contamination was unusually great and because the source of the asbestos was unknown. This caused a great deal of concern when we were told a few hours later that the room would be ready for occupancy within a few days. When we tried to find out the reason for the sudden change we were unsuccessful.

The original information turned out to be wrong: we were told by the certified industrial hygienist that all the library rooms had been relatively clean and that there was nothing unusual about the room in question. By then, however, the decision to move the libraries had been made and distancing ourselves from Wheeler seemed the best way to extract ourselves from all the problems associated with occupying it. All those involved in this crisis, librarians, administrators, faculty, and staff, have struggled to be patient with each other.

The librarians have tried to ensure a quick, efficient and fair restoration of services without sacrificing quality. The administrators have tried to balance our concerns with the reality of a tight budget.

We have been assured that our library employees are probably not at any health risk from asbestos, but there are lingering doubts about other workers who were probably contaminated: the janitors and movers who were sent in to Wheeler without protection. We need to be aware of health and safety on the job and to make sure that we are not being asked to perform tasks which might endanger us. We should try to get as much information as possible and to call on the Union when we have concerns about our right to a safe working place.

--L. Castillo-Speed, Chicano Studies Library

VOTE YES ON PROP 97!

PROP 97 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: WHAT DOES PROPOSITION 97 DO?

A: It restores Cal-OSHA, California's respected Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the state program which protects people from death, illness and injury on the job. The agency's coverage of private sector workers was eliminated after Gov. Deukmejian cut its funding in 1987.

Q: WHY WAS STATE SUPPORT FOR CAL-OSHA CUT?

A: The Governor and his representatives said it would save the state money. They said that the federal government, through Federal OSHA, would protect health and safety in private sector workplaces just as well if the state program was ended. (The state still remains responsible for inspections at state and local government job sites.)

Q: WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

A: Cal-OSHA was vastly superior to Federal OSHA in protecting people at work. Cal-OSHA's standards for worker protection are generally much broader than Federal OSHA and they protected people from perils the federal program doesn't cover. Cal-OSHA inspectors had authority to shut down equipment or job sites posing imminent dangers of death or serious injury. It takes time-consuming court action before federal inspectors can act.

Q: WHAT ELSE DID CAL-OSHA DO THAT FEDERAL OSHA DOES NOT?

A: Only Cal-OSHA banned use of the infamous short-handled hoe, which crippled generations of California farm workers who were forced to work bent over as they cultivated crops. Only Cal-OSHA had a permit process so it knew in advance when and where to inspect potentially dangerous construction sites. Only Cal-OSHA inspectors could respond to anonymous phone tips on violations. (Federal OSHA requires formal written and signed complaints.) Cal-OSHA had to investigate every injury accident. (Federal OSHA only routinely investigates incidents if someone dies on the job or if five or more people are hospitalized.

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UFL News is produced by the Executive Committee of the University Federation of Librarians, Berkeley Campus, AFT Local 1795, a part of University Council-AFT, representing Faculty, Librarians and Academic Researchers of the University of California.

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Q: DOES PROPOSITION 97 MEAN INCREASED TAXES OR MORE GOVERNMENT REGULATION?

A: No. It will just mean the same higher standard of protection Californians once enjoyed.

MEASURE H SPELLS LIBRARY RELIEF

A decade after Proposition 13, California's public libraries are still searching for stable funding sources to assure the development and continuation of quality library services to our diverse populations. In Berkeley, we are proposing Measure H-- the Library Relief Act of 1988--on the November ballot. Measure H will extend, revise, and make permanent the successful Library Tax

passed in 1980.

Measure H will raise approximately $6,000,000 annually for library services, and will fully fund the Berkeley Public Library. The tax, based on square footage of buildings in Berkeley and with a higher rate for businesses than residences, will allow the Library to re-open seven days a week. It contains a full exemption for very-low-income homeowners.

We need a 2/3 majority vote to pass the measure. This is an enormous undertaking. However, we're confident that if Berkeley citizens know what Measure H will provide in terms of library services, programs and staff, they will adopt the measure.

Please contact Susana Hinojosa (2-5070) for more information on the Measure and for endorsement cards. We would truly appreciate your endorsement and contributions. We are also in need of any campaign help you can provide--precinct walking, telephoning, publicity work, etc. Thank you. --Jane Scantlebury (653-9964, home), Keep Libraries Alive Campaign (Librarian, Berkeley Public Library, member SEIU 535)

DUKAKIS ENDORSED BY AFL-CIO

On August 24 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis accepted the unanimous endorsement of the AFL-CIO. Promising to maintain a "partnership between the labor movement and the White House," Dukakis emphasized the need for teamwork to make America "number one again." The American Federation of Teachers cast all its votes for Dukakis/Bentsen, endorsing the ticket "that will support education in America."

PROPOSITIONS--YES YES NO NO YES...

The AFL-CIO endorses a YES vote for all the California propositions on the November ballot with the following exceptions:

- Proposition 89, allowing the governor to reverse or modify decisions of the parole authority regarding persons sentenced for indeterminate terms for murder...NO
- Proposition 96, enabling courts to require testing for AIDS...No Recommendation
- Proposition 99, imposing a new tax on cigarettes to pay for health programs... No Recommendation
- Proposition 101, limiting auto accident claims for non-economic damages and for attorney fees...NO
- Proposition 102, requiring doctors and others to report persons they believed to be infected with AIDS...NO
- Proposition 104, establishing a "no-fault" insurance system...NO
- Proposition 106, limiting attorney fees in tort claims...NO

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters. With your permission we will reprint those that raise interesting questions. For instance, there was a question about the article we printed last issue about VDTs and miscarriages. It was pointed out that we did not cite our sources.

The source of our information was the CALIFORNIA AFL-CIO NEWS: "Study Links Miscarriages to VDT Work," June 10, 1988; and "New Concern on VDTs, Pregnancy," June 17, 1988. Below is the abstract of the original research article, "The Risk of Miscarriage and Birth Defects Among Women Who Use Visual Display Terminals During Pregnancy" by Marilyn K. Goldhaber, Michael R. Polen and Robert A. Hiatt, which appeared in the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE (13:695-706 (1988)):

Use of visual display terminals (VDTs) was examined in a case- control study of pregnancy outcome among 1,583 pregnant women who attended Kaiser Permanente obstetrics and gynecology clinics in Northern California, 1981-1982. We found a significantly elevated risk of miscarriage for working women who reported using VDTs for more than 20 hr per week during the first trimester of pregnancy compared to other working women who reported not using VDTs ... This risk could not be explained by age, education, occupation, smoking, alcohol consumption, or other maternal characteristics ... One possible explanation for these findings is that women who had adverse pregnancy outcomes may have overreported their exposures to VDTs and/or women with normal births may have underreported theirs. The findings may also be due to unmeasured factors confounded with high VDT use such as poor ergonomic conditions or job-related stress. That VDTs themselves are hazardous to the pregnant operator remains a possibility. Our results underscore the need for large cohort studies of working women that will provide objective measures of VDT exposures, ergonomic factors, and stress.

WELCOME BACK, MARI!

We are very pleased to announce that Mari Miller has been rehired at full-time at the same rank and step she had when she was laid off. She has been hired as a reference librarian at Moffitt beginning with the fall semester. We see this as a victory for the Union since two layoff cases, this one at Berkeley and another at UCLA, have been resolved in our favor.

AFT LOCAL 1795 ELECTIONS

Please think about volunteering to serve on the Executive Committee of our local. We need dedicated people so we will be contacting you soon. You can't hide! Elections for 1988-89 will be held later this month,

OTHER LOCALS, OTHER UNIONS

We co-sponsored a presentation in the Local 1474 Series entitled "Prosecuting the Perpetrators: Catching Violators in the Workplace; The Need for Cal-OSHA." Guest speakers were Jan Chatten-Brown, Special Assistant to L.A. District Attorney, and Tom Rankin, Research Director, California Labor Federation. It was held November 2 at the Alumni House.

We have also been asked to attend a meeting of the Associated Graduate Student Employees Union. This is another group that we support in its efforts to better their working conditions.

COAL IN THE STOCKING AGAIN

Holiday energy curtailment has been scheduled for campus for the period of December 23 to January 2. Once again librarians are expected to take vacation time to accommodate the University's schedule. Of course, the Union disagrees with this policy. We strongly suggest that you ask your department now what procedures will be followed during these three days. If there are any problems or concerns about those procedures please contact us as soon as possible.

NEW PARKING DIRECTIONS

The draft of a plan for transportation and parking on campus is available for inspection and comment at the General Reference Desk and Moffitt until December 22. Written by the Campus Planning Office and the New Directions Work Group, it is entitled "New Directions in Transportation Plan." Beth Sibley, our parking liaison, is reviewing it and we are also in contact with Catherine Cortelyou, who is in the work group. The Union also has a copy you can look at. In the meantime we see no changes until Fall 1989. The plan calls for a substantial parking fee increase but does not address eligibility. The UFL will be asking for a meeting sometime in November with Labor Relations on this issue. Let us know what you think about the plan. You can also send your comments to the Chancellor.

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